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ISSUES NOW CHALLENGING THE PROFESSION.

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DESPITE ADVANCES MADE TOWARD THE CREATION OF A GENUINE PROFESSION, THE RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS REVEAL THAT A NUMBER OF TRAINING PROBLEMS PERSIST. THE ONE OF UTMOST CONCERN IS THE ADMISSION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS IN THE PROGRAM ON THE BASIS OF NOT ONLY THEIR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES, BUT ALSO THEIR PERSONALITIES AND LANGUAGE TEACHING POTENTIAL. A GREAT DEAL OF THE BLAME FOR THE INADEQUATE TRAINING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF LANGUAGES CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS. NATIONAL CERTIFICATION STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION OF TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS WOULD HELP ELIMINATE FROM THE PROFESSION THE INADEQUATELY TRAINED AND POORLY MOTIVATED LANGUAGE TEACHER. ALTHOUGH PROBLEM AREAS DO REMAIN, THE CREATION OF ERIC AND SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE BREAKTHROUGHS IN LEGISLATION HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT STEPS TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRONGER PROFESSION. (AB)

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ISSUES NOW CHALLENGING THE PROFESSION

The issues now challenging us could all be included under the single term, "professional dedication". A far greater professional commitment must characterize our thoughts and actions in the immediate future. This dedication will call for some sacrifice of our time, energy and even of our pocketbooks.

I am reminded of a pre-inflation incident. Some years ago a high administrative official at my university appealed to the faculty to plan to devote not less than 10% of their income to professional improvement. His thesis was that it paid off in the long run. He cited his own case in which his expertise brought him many offers of summer positions, one of which he accepted at the then good salary of 500 dollars for a single course in the summer session of a leading university. A few days later, I attended the meeting of our undergraduate Spanish club. A pretty young co-ed said to me, "You know, I waited on table in a restaurant on Long Island this summer and came home with $1500!"

Just the other day, I read of the all too common story, the new salary scales of a nearby community in which the starting salary for janitors was several hundred dollars higher than the starting salary for teachers.

We must be aware that as yet we are not a profession in the true sense of the word. In a few moments, Dr. Mildenberger will tell us of some of the important steps now being taken toward the formation of the profession of foreign language

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teaching. We can hardly help being aware that tremendous strides have been and are being taken in this direction. Surely one of the landmarks, perhaps a better term is "benchmark", is the October issue of the Modern Language Journal, recapitulating most of the progress up to date. The history of the MLA development of the Guidelines for Teacher Education Programs in Modern Foreign Languages merits our closest attention - as does everything else in that issue, especially "Professional Action" on page 19 and "A Call to Action" on page 77.

It is notable that reprints have gone to chairmen of all foreign language departments in four-year colleges, local and state foreign language supervisors, participants in the MLA teacher training conference during the last four years and many others. If by any chance you have not received a copy, the MLA Materials Center will be happy to send one to you for the modest sum of $1.00.

In the whole section on the Guidelines for Teacher Education Programs we have a goal, a very high goal, to take to heart - or to our own consciences... We hardly dare call ourselves a profession which is in charge of its own destiny until we actually do something about the statement in the first paragraph on the second page, "The institution has a clearly formulated policy concerning admission to, retention in, and completion of the program."

This is a simple, clear and obviously true statement (if we are to consider ourselves members of a "profession").

But is it true of the sequence of courses in which we teach? The annual MLA Conference on New Developments in Teacher Training has attempted to find out. The increasing number of conferees during the past several years has shown a genuine concern in this matter of FL teacher training. 257 questionnaires were sent to past members of the Conference requesting an evaluation of the extent of implementation of the criteria of the MLA guidelines. Self-evaulation was asked on each of the 10 guideline statements on the features of a Teacher Education Program in Modern Foreign Languages. Anonymity was promised and was kept and will be kept as to the name of the institution and of the respondent, usually the person in charge of FL Teacher Education or the department chairman. For each of the items of the evaluation a rating was provided from A, "the guidline is fully implemented by our program as it stands now" to F, "it is not implemented at all, and our program probably could not, under any forseeable conditions, be brought up to standard in this area."

In spite of the interest shown by attendance at the annual Conference, only 26 replies were received. Granted that we are all questionnaire-weary, that some institutions not reporting are doing a very fine job, it may be permitted to consider that some colleges or universities preferred not to reveal sins of omission, since all questionnaires were to be signed but under the pledge of anonymity. Reviewing the findings of the questionnaire, one nationally prominent colleague stated even more bluntly, "We simply didn't hear from the vast,

submerged, ineffective mass of our teacher training institutions."

However, the 26 institutions which did reply do represent, I believe, a fair sampling of the present situation. They included prestigious Ivy League Colleges, major big-ten universities, strong small liberal arts colleges, and a few of the kind of institution which trains a considerable number of our future colleagues but - we wish they didn't.

On this matter of a "clearly formulated policy concerning admission to, retention in and completion of the program," only 8 institutions or less than 30 percent found that the statement is fully implemented. Can you imagine a school of law or of medicine which has no such "clearly formulated policy"? 54 percent of the institutions stated that this guideline is "fairly well implemented now by our program, which can be brought up to standard with some more professional attention and money." Let us hope so! What about the remaining institutions? They answered that their program is rather poorly implemented or even (D on the scale) "not implemented at all, and our program would need, to be brought up to standard, ...massive doses of professional attention and money."

As to the other guidelines, no less than 69 percent felt that they were in the "A" category in 4 of the guidelines with the others trailing down to as few as 12 percent of the institutions reporting. Overall, the weakest categories were in the area of the use of proficiency tests to evaluate the four language skills for admission to the institution and to

the institution and to the FL teacher education program, of language analysis, and of maintenance of a curriculum library containing the materials and equipment commonly used in teaching modern foreign languages in elementary and secondary schools.

The MLA Guidelines say nothing about a matter at least as important as good programs doing a good job of training future FL teachers in the various competencies now believed to be required of a practising member of the profession. Even the NDEA Institutes, doing such a fine overall job in this area, are not doing much of anything about it. A few years ago, Wallace Lambert stated at Seminar on Language Training held at the University of Washington, "...language teachers and their trainers could profit from a careful study of current research in the psychology of personality. This area of specialization offers various means of selecting those who would be most effective as language teachers, a matter as important as it is neglected in educational research."[1]

I believe that the two most important constructive moves towards the creation of a genuine profession are the MLA statement of the seven qualifications for secondary school teachers of modern foreign language and the new Guidelines for Teacher Education Programs. The former was only a sort of "pious creed", albeit one that took a giant step forward and put us on a par with, or ahead of, many professions, until the NDEA funding of the creation of the now well-known but too little used, MLA Teacher Proficiency Tests. The

history of their development, modification, amplification and application is one of the most brilliant achievements of any profession. Now, the MLA Guidelines need much further discussion, refinement, and, above all, implementation.

In spite of the tremendous achievements of the NDEA Institutes and of the progress in the whole area of testing about which you have just heard and of the important steps towards the formation of a genuine profession about which you will soon hear, I believe that it is high time that we all become concerned with the "admission to and retention in" FL teacher training programs, NOT merely on the basis of FL skill and knowledge competencies but on the basis of personality and of the potential for effective language teaching. A few years ago, at a major FL conference, I was a little startled to hear a State Supervisor of Foreign Languages start his talk by saying, "Since two thirds of all our foreign language teachers are not prepared for the work they are doing..." Yet experience as a director of a subminimal NDEA institute, director of two overseas second-level institutes and rather wide visitation of a considerable range of secondary schools has convinced me that this is all too true.

Many of you have read Professor Jack Stein's review of the MacAllister-Valdman Report of the Seminar for College Teachers of French, German, and Spanish in the October issue of the Modern Language Journal. Its opening paragraph challenges everyone of us:

The situation is ridiculous; every summer increasing numbers of <u>recent</u> college graduates apply to the NDEA Institutes to learn what they should have been taught as undergraduate foreign language majors. Why weren't they taught these things as undergraduates? Because their college teachers don't know them! And why don't they know them? Because they never learned them in graduate school where they were trained (or not trained). Why not? Because tenure Professor X and tenure Professor Y couldn't care less. As long as the teachers' teachers' teachers (the graduate school professors who teach the future secondary school teachers) don't train the teachers' teachers, the latter can't train the teachers properly. It's that simple (or complex).

After a discussion of the content of the report, Professor Stein concludes,

> Perhaps most startling was the revelation that the participants didn't even know very much about theories of literature (not theories of <u>teaching</u> literature) when they arrived. What <u>did</u> you teach them, Professor X and Professor Y?

After a great many years of training future FL teachers in a departmental courses disguised as "Advanced Language Study" which attempted to upgrade or "finish off" the basic language skills and impart all the "latest and best" in methods and materials, leaving all the rest of the professional

training to the School of Education, I abandoned all false pride and am now teaching a course called Education 310, Principles and Methods of Teaching - Foreign Languages. The students met with me for eight hours per week during the first eight weeks of the current semester then departed from the campus for eight weeks of observation and practice teaching.

During our eight weeks of intensive work I attempted to do something about this matter of personality and potential for effective teaching. Along with the usual study and discussion of the newer texts and the analysis and evaluation of materials we viewed and discussed most of the available films which demonstrate various teaching methods. Towards the end of our work together each student did some peer teaching, all of which was recorded on videotape. For the first time, the immediate playback enabled the student demonstration teacher as well as the class to hear and see the whole performance. Each member of the class, including the student who had just performed before the camera, was asked to make a written evaluation, particularly as regards personality and effective teaching. All these evaluations I carry with me as I visit the various schools over the state where their students are doing their full-time practice teaching.

All of this is, in a sense, <u>ex post facto,</u> and completely experimental. I am venturing into what is for me a totally new field, searching for a means to identify those qualities of personality which make for effective teaching and without

which even superior FL proficiencies are non-communicative. I wonder if every one of us has not, at some time, sat under a non-teacher. More important, how many of those now sitting under us will be non-teachers even though supposedly well trained and eventually licensed to teach.

As I visit Massachusetts high schools this semester, I am taking with me more than the subjective and naive evaluations of the videotaped performances. After consultation with colleagues in Psychology, Guidance Counseling and Professional Education, I decided to administer two tests to my guinea-pig future teachers, one a teacher aptitude inventory, the other a so-called personality schedule. To date, the former has been a relatively good predictor of successful teaching and has confirmed the subjective impressions recorded at the end of the first eight weeks of the class. The personality inventory was a complete fiasco. The 15 personality traits examined added up to nothing significant, many of the findings were mutually contradictory. The most amusing was the case of a happily married father of four children. He rated "very low" in heterosexuality!

I realize that I have not even scratched the surface in venturing into this area. It is probably a case of "fools rush in..." but I shall continue my search for better instruments which, hopefully, can do a job worth doing, the elimination of the unfit and the early identification of those who could make valued members of our profession.

Finally, we all bear some responsibility in the matter of

the actual licensing of beginning FL teachers. Great progress has been made in those states in which the legal certifying agencies have, in effect, handed the licensing authority over to approved programs of teacher training and in those states in which the MLA Teacher Proficiency Tests are required for certification whether provisional or permanent. Yet there remain even here two important and unresolved problems. The first is this shifting around of teaching assignments after appointment to a full time position. How many FL student drop-outs are due not to poor teaching by a poor teacher but to poor teaching by a teacher who has suddenly been required to teach a subject in which she "minored", i.e., studied not much more than the elementary and intermediate courses in college. As long as I live I shall never forget that hot July Sunday when we registered the participants in a Code Level 4 Institute under the "no English spoken" rule. Communication was mostly by kinesics! These subminimal but full-time teachers of French were teaching as high as the Advanced Placement level yet the average amount of study of French for the entire group was less than four college semesters - X years ago!

Secondly, there is the thorny matter of the national accreditation of teacher training programs. Many directors of these programs feel that accreditation is due the students completing the program, no matter what the pressures from accrediting

agencies. I earnestly recommend that you read and learn from the report of the National Commission on Accrediting entitled, Accreditation in Teacher Education - Its Influence on Higher Education.[2] If you are not concerned now, I am pretty certain that you will be after reading it.

From all the foregoing, it is obvious that I have considered our colleagues at the elementary and secondary levels members of our profession of equal standing with us. I am not unaware of problems and challenges at the college and university level. We must all do our own thinking, soul-searching and study of the higher level problems. I prefer to think of them in terms of the whole profession - a chain, not of command, but of cooperation and integration, no stronger than its weakest link. I do not need at this point to evoke such problems as culture, traditional and anthropological, creeping commercialism in the production and dissemination of new materials, audio-lingual versus what-have-you, the still growing "publish or perish" damage, the parlous state of FLES, the scandal of the "TA racket," the unreasoning fear of the machine, the hoards of teenagers, whether of high school or college age, now flooding Europe in poorly managed or, in some cases, unmanaged programs, to mention only a few. These challenges are well known to you.

Do not feel that I only "view with alarm," a Cassandra prophesying doom. I am well aware of and rejoice in brilliant achievements and forward steps being taken by our profession even though I agree with William Riley Parker who stated in the Foreword in the October issue of the Modern Language Journal, "...get to work on the foundation (of a profession) before the edifice falls."

Now I would like to turn to some significant new developments which have in them the potential for great gains in our profession. ERIC-MLA and ERIC-Center for Applied Linguistics will at long last provide us with a national system of information storage and dissemination of documents, published and unpublished, of significance. The potential for professional gains here is practically unlimited. However, these ERICs can prosper and be meaningful only to the extent of our participation, both as producers and consumers of the material processed through these clearinghouses. An official of the U.S. Office of Education recently stated in Washington, "It is time to end the 'go it alone' philosophy, and be aware of what is going on down the road, around the corner." I imagine that all of you have had the experience of learning, sometimes by publication, sometimes almost by accident, of an important experiment or piece of research in your own neighborhood. Some of these are known only to the researchers and a few colleagues and never reach our ears or eyes. ERIC can help enormously in "sharing the wealth".

At this point I will not dwell on the creation of a first national FL membership organization since it properly belongs in the next presentation this afternoon. I would like to conclude with some current Washington developments of great importance for the improvement of our profession. The first is CONPASS, which is described on page A-16 of the November issue of PMLA . In the opinion of many of our colleagues, this is called a "monumental step", a dialogue among all disciplines in teacher education.

The "breakthroughs" of new federal legislation and the consequent agencies created need our attention. Among these are the new develop-

ments under Title III of NDEA , as yet unfufilledd opportunities under ESEA, the FL implications and opportunities under the new International Education Act and now those under the new Arts and Humanities Foundations. Also, the still developing Experienced Teacher Fellowship Program which subsidizes graduate work in approved programs leading to any degree short of the Ph.D. I have just said "approved programs". To me, this seems to mean that traditional graduate courses leading toward a Master's Degree will not constitute an approved program and that only more imaginative and forward-looking programs will be funded. The fact that no less than 1800 proposals were received indicated that many of our colleagues are interested in this new opportunity to upgrade a great many members of our profession.

Toynbee has stated, "If education as we now know it is to survive, we must make lightning fast responses." I think I have cited some of these responses and I would conclude with this thought: The students now in our classes will scarcely be beyond middle age in the twenty-first century.

Footnotes

[1] A work paper prepared for a Seminar on Language Teacher Training, University of Washington, summer 1962, pp. 1-2.

[2] Published by the National Commission on Accrediting, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036.